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INNER CITY LATIN CONFERENCE, WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 1967.

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LATIN TEACHERS AND LANGUAGE SUPERVISORS IN CHICAGO, DETROIT, CLEVELAND, PHILADELPHIA, AND NEW YORK VISITED FIVE 6TH AND 7TH GRADE CLASSES IN FIVE DIFFERENT WASHINGTON, D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AND PARTICIPATED IN DISCUSSIONS AFTERWARDS WITH LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS, CURRICULUM WRITERS, AND TEACHERS. THE CLASSROOMS VISITED WERE INVOLVED IN EXPERIMENTAL LATIN PROGRAMS DEVISED BY JUDITH LEBOVIT, FOREIGN LANGUAGE SUPERVISING DIRECTOR FOR D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS. CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS ARE IDENTIFIED AND SOME OF THE VISITORS' REACTIONS (MOSTLY FAVORABLE) ARE GIVEN. REMARKS ARE MADE ON EULA CUTT'S LATIN HERITAGE COURSE FOR VERBALLY DEPRIVED STUDENTS IN DETROIT. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE CLASSICAL WORLD," VOLUME 61, NUMBER 5, JANUARY 1968, PAGES 178-180. (AF)

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IN THE SCHOOLS

INNER CITY LATIN CONFERENCE WASHINGTON, D.C., NOVEMBER 1967

Two articles in the November 18, 1967 *Saturday Review* plot the woes of public education in large cities today. *Washington Post* reporter Susan Jacoby's "National Monument to Failure" is a study of current crises in the Washington, D.C. public schools.[1] Miss Jacoby writes: "Washington has the closest thing to an all-ghetto school system of any city in the nation. Nearly 91% of its students are Negro. More important, a majority of public school students come from a poverty sub-culture which stymies traditional educators."[2] In "Requiem for the Urban School," Prof. Edgar Z. Friedenberg comments on recent exposé books written by former inner city public school teachers in Boston and Harlem. Prof. Friedenberg concludes that the dreadful conditions such authors describe "are quite general. They are not peculiar to any one school or city."[3] Further, "The urban slum schools are run by awful people."[4]

In the face of such data it might seem ludicrous to promote Latin as an elective subject for urban public schools. From the Washington, D.C. ghetto and elsewhere comes evidence to the contrary. We do not question the facts the two authors adduce. Rather, in the large and fantastastically complex world of public education, we wish to point to *other facts* which we believe should temper the sharp and stark generalization proposed in these articles.

On November 6-7 and 13-14, 1967, Washington, D.C. was the scene of an Inner City Latin Conference.[5] The Conference was sponsored by the American Classical League under its grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for exploration of problems related to elementary Latin instruction. It was directed by ACL Executive Secretary John F. Latimer in cooperation with Dr. Judith LeBovit, Foreign Language Supervising Director for D.C. Public Schools.

Dr. LeBovit's essay, *"Qui timide rogat, docet negare,"* describes the genesis, structure and administration of her experimental programs for 6th and 7th grade Latin in the D.C. public schools.[6] Since these programs are similar to those recommended by Oxford Conference Committee I,[7] and since their rapid expansion is a unique phenomenon in public education today, it was thought that a visitation and discussion of them might be of great practical value for administrators and teachers from other urban school systems.

Invitations were issued to Latin teachers and language supervisors in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia and New York. Participants had an opportunity to visit five 6th and 7th grade classes in five different D.C. public schools. There followed discussions with local administrators, curriculum writers and teachers. To avoid too large a number of observers in a class at the same time, the visitors came in two groups on successive Mondays. Dr. Latimer and Dr. LeBovit accompanied them in their classroom observations.

The following participated in the Conference:

Nov. 6-7: from Philadelphia: Mrs. Eleanor L. Sandstrom, FL Curriculum Specialist for the School District of Philadelphia; Mr. William McCoy, FL Department Head, Germantown High School; Mr. Rudolph Masciantonio, Latin teacher at South Philadelphia High School; from Chicago: Mr. Edwin Cudecki, Acting Director of FL Department, Chicago Public Schools; Mrs. Alice N. Mulberry, Latin teacher at Hyde Park High School.

Nov. 13-14: from Detroit: Dr. Naida M. Dostal, FL Supervisor for Detroit Public Schools; Mrs. Eula Gayl Cutt, FL Department Chairman, Northwestern High School; Miss Orlene Kreger, Latin teacher at Mackenzie High School; from Cleveland: Mr. Eugene Dawson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Director for FL, Cleveland Public Schools; Dr. Leonard Freyman, Director of Education of the Cleveland Heights - University Heights City School System; Father

1. Susan L. Jacoby, "Big City Schools IV — Washington: National Monument to Failure," *Saturday Review* (Nov. 18, 1967) 71 sq.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, "Requiem for the Urban School," *Saturday Review* (Nov. 18, 1967) 93.

4. *Op. cit.*, 94.

5. We wish to thank Dr. John F. Latimer and Dr. Judith LeBovit for providing the information on which this account is based. Prepared originally for *CW*, it will appear as part of the official account of the Inner City Latin Conference which will be printed with the Oxford Conference Report. Consult also Dr. Latimer's reports in forthcoming issues of *CO* and the CAUSA *Newsletter*.

6. See *CW* 61 No. 2 (Oct. 1967) 37-40.

7. See the résumé and discussion in *CW* 61, No. 1 (Sept. 1967) 2-6. It may be noted that Dr. Latimer's national office this fall was the scene of intense activity. A task group met twice to prepare and edit sample teaching materials based on the recommendations of Oxford Committee I. The chairmen of the four Oxford Conference Committees met for final editing of the Report, whose appearance in printed form is expected for early 1968.

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Henry Gardocki, S.J., Western Reserve University and St. Ignatius High School; Mr. Raymond F. Nisius, Latin teacher at Wiley Junior High School; from New York, Dr. Israel Walker, FL Department Chairman, Flushing High School.

The conference on Nov. 13 also welcomed Mr. Hans H. Oerberg, Latin and English Master at Grenaa Gymnasium, Denmark, who was visiting Washington after his address to the CAAS meeting at Lehigh University on November 11. Mr. Oerberg observed classes with the conferees, and later gave a description of his book, *Lingua Latina secundum Naturae Rationem Explicata,* that proved highly interesting in the context of inner city Latin.

At both sessions, in addition to consultation with Dr. Latimer and Dr. LeBovit, discussions were held with Mr. Paul T. Garrett, Assistant Director of FL, D.C. Public Schools, and these curriculum writers and teachers: Dr. Annette H. Eaton, Howard University, Mrs. William Gerber, Wilson High School, Mrs. Virginia Clapper, University of Maryland, and Mrs. Marie Thompson, Paul Junior High School. The writer joined some of the discussion sessions.

The reactions of the visitors to their day in D.C. Latin classrooms provide some interesting reflections on the quotations from the *Saturday Review* articles given above. The five schools visited offer a cross-section of D.C. public schools. The neighborhoods of these schools vary from the affluent to the very poor. There was no "urban school" stereotype in evidence. Visitors remarked on the discipline and order evident not only during class sessions but also in the corridors between classes. There were evident differences in verbal ability from group to group. Yet the observers judged that the orientation of the programs toward general language proficiency was flexible enough to provide a valid, viable and attractive educational experience for all students in them.

One observer, Mrs. Eula Cutt, has received national recognition for her Latin Heritage course for verbally deprived students in Detroit.[8] Characteristically, she thought that the best class was the one with the "poorest" students. "The teacher had them really *reaching,*" she said.

Communications received from the conferees by Dr. Latimer and Dr. LeBovit since the meetings indicate a favorable evaluation, and a concern to strengthen or develop similar Latin programs in the urban school districts represented. A typical response is that of Dr. Leonard Freyman of the Cleveland Heights - University Heights public schools, who wrote to Dr. LeBovit: "I left Washington with the deep conviction that you had a first-rate educational experience for children in action and an enthusiasm for this program that has kept me excited about it ever since."

What can we conclude from these impressions of a brief visit by thirteen educators from five cities to a segment of an experimental program for 1745 6th and 7th grade Latin students? In sum, where there is fire there is hope.

In response to Dr. Friedenberg we would say that there are *some wonderful people* administering and teaching in slum schools in the District of Columbia. As Miss Jacoby suggests, one should be fully aware of the massive problem of the retarded reading ability of so many students in urban schools. Obviously this problem should receive all possible attention. Yet sympathy for the poorest students should not obscure the fact that the dominantly Negro urban school population presents a full spectrum of ability and achievement. The evidence in Washington suggests that foreign language study in general and Latin study in particular can be truly educative for *all* urban students: to develop a healing sense of language-in-general, to learn to grasp one's own language by contrasting it with another, to have access to the humanism inherent in good foreign language instruction.

In a recent note Prof. Bernice Samalonis, of the Department of Education at Hunter College in New York, writes: "For slum schools Latin is not a useless item in the curriculum."[9] News brought by participants in the Inner City Latin Conference provides further evidence of the usefulness of Latin in urban schools. Mrs. Eula Cutt's Latin Heritage program mentioned above continues to develop at Northwestern High School in Detroit. The program has spread to two other high schools there. This year Northwestern has seven sections of Latin Heritage, with a total of over 150 students. Mrs. Cutt continues extensive use of overhead-projector trans-

8. For information on Mrs. Cutt's ACL Master Teacher and Program award, and on her Latin Heritage program, consult: E. M. A. Kovach, "Ten Master Teacher and Program Award Programs, *CW* 60 (1966-67) 39; E. M. A. Kovach, *"Admirandi, Laudandi, Imitandi," CO* 44 (1966-67) 40-42; H. Hayden, "Classics in the Inner City School — Experiments and Proposals," *CW* 60 (1966-67) 96.

9. See Prof. Samalonis's note under the rubric, "New York," in *CO* 45, No. 3 (Nov. 1967) 27.

parencies and other audio-visual aids. A new development is an experimental block program, in which students remain together in the same section for the whole school day. A coordinated program is developed by the Latin teacher, the English teacher and the reading teacher working as a team. Thus English derivatives from Latin are handled in the English class, while the reading course reinforces the Latin work by the assignment and discussion of books with a classical background.

Detroit's Northwestern continues to teach a full standard Latin curriculum, with seven sections taught this year. The school has a total of 34 foreign language classes. Its enrollment is 99% Negro.

Mrs. Cutt reported that since the publicity of the ACL Master Teacher award she has received numerous inquiries from teachers interested in developing similar programs. One such inquirer was a participant in the Inner City Latin Conference. It is a pleasure to report that Mrs. Alice Mulberry has this year initiated a Latin Heritage program at Hyde Park High School in Chicago.

Tempora mutantur. At present, inner city Latin programs are as but a mustard seed in the schools of our major cities. Does the evidence of their burgeoning provided by the Inner City Latin Conference portend a new kind of contribution to the American school by the classical tradition? In today's troubled world, such a development seems eminently worthy of further study and research.[10]

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